



# REPORT

## Council

**Meeting Date: October 21, 2024**

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**FROM:** Office of the Mayor

**DATE:** October 8, 2024

**SUBJECT:** World Council on City Data Funding Request for Adoption of ISO 37125 – Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) Indicators for Cities

**LOCATION:** Town Hall

**WARD:** Town-wide

Page 1

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### RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the Town of Oakville join the World Council on City Data (WCCD) and Standardized Urban Metrics (SUM) as one of the first adopters of ISO 37125 – Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) Indicators for Cities.
2. That Council approve funding of \$300,000 from the contingency fund to participate in the adoption of a new data standard, ISO – 37125 Environmental, Social and Governance Indicators for Cities.
3. That a sole source award be approved.

### KEY FACTS:

The following are key points for consideration with respect to this report:

- ISO 37125 is the very first global standard ever to be published by the International Organization (ISO) in Geneva on Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG).
- ISO 37125 is designed to support city and regional governments in creating data-informed ESG Profiles and to demonstrate commitment to Environmental Sustainability, Social Inclusion and Sound Governance. Local governments can use ISO 37125-verified ESG indicators to create a data-driven *Annual ESG Profile Report* to attract, drive, and develop investment attraction. This new ISO Standard on Key Performance Indicators for ESG will also support the growing demand for cities and their regions to both enter

the debenture markets and expand their bond issuances to support their capital plans.

- The WCCD, through its previous work with the Town of Oakville and partnerships with the Federal and Provincial governments, has expressed confidence in the Town's ability to achieve ISO 37125 certification during the course of the program.
- Working with WCCD allows the town to benchmark our performance, with consistent criteria and measures, against national and international cities and regions.
- ISO 37125 certification will provide the Town of Oakville with valuable data to foster a prosperous, inclusive, and vibrant community, enhancing the quality of life for all residents.

**BACKGROUND:**

The World Council on City Data (WCCD) was founded in Canada in 2014 and exists to help cities and communities of all sizes globally embrace ISO standardized, independently verified, and globally comparable city data to make data driven decisions on management, planning and investment, monitor progress and results, and overall become more sustainable, safe and resilient, prosperous, inclusive and smart.

Working with national standards bodies, the WCCD has established a third-party verification and certification scheme for cities to become WCCD ISO certified - supporting a city's commitment to data driven planning, management and investment.

The Town of Oakville achieved WCCD ISO 37120 Platinum Certification for 2017. This certification recognized that Oakville had achieved the highest possible standard for data collection on 100 key performance indicators for City Services and Quality of Life.

Since its founding, the WCCD has been expanding a global network of cities dedicated to high calibre data. WCCD is now working with 100 cities in 35 countries, helping these cities to become ISO certified. The WCCD and the Council's City Data Platform now includes over 276 key performance indicators (KPIs) across the ISO 37120 Series that enable a city to determine infrastructure deficits and investment decisions, build accurate baselines and monitor year over year progress, attract foreign direct investment and advance economic development through nationally

and globally comparative data and benchmarking, and overall - assess city services and quality of life for residents.

As a partner of WCCD, Standardized Urban Metrics (SUM) is at the forefront of implementing the new ISO 37125 Standard on ESG for cities. This Standard provides city leaders, governments, and the private sector with a robust, data-driven framework to guide ESG initiatives. By leveraging standardized data, SUM develops strategic roadmaps for annual reporting, ESG leadership, and investment.

SUM draws on over several decades of combined experience, helping cities, governments, and the private sector collect and utilize globally comparable and independently verified city-data. WCCD, which created the first-ever certification system for city standards, manages the Global Cities Registry® for ISO 37120, ISO 37122, and ISO 37123.

SUM and WCCD staff were pivotal in publishing the ISO 37120 Series of Standards for City Indicators, the first globally recognized performance standards on city data, released by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) in Geneva. WCCD and SUM's expertise in developing and implementing ISO 37120, ISO 37122, and ISO 37123 is pre-evident, with these standards now adopted by over 100 cities across 40 countries.

Building on this foundation, SUM and WCCD have established a global hub for innovative learning partnerships among cities, international organizations, corporate partners, and academia. Together, they aim to foster innovation, imagine alternative futures, and create more livable cities.

SUM is welcoming cities to join this exciting global cohort of ISO 37125-certified cities.

Since 2014, cities across Canada being certified under the ISO 37120 Series have included: the County of Brant, Brampton, Edmonton, Mississauga, Vaughan, Toronto, Richmond Hill, Markham, Oshawa, Whitby, North Grenville, Yellowknife, Selkirk, Sudbury, Charlottetown, Annapolis Valley Region, Corner Brook, Halifax, Mount Pearl, St. John's, Quebec City, Saint-Augustin-de-Desmaures, Shawinigan, Saskatoon, Surrey, Kitchener, Welland, Waterloo, Cambridge, Caledon and Guelph.

Cities across the globe being certified under the ISO 37120 Series include Dubai, London, Boston, Buenos Aires, Johannesburg, Amsterdam, Helsinki, Los Angeles, San Diego, and others across over 40 countries.

**COMMENT/OPTIONS:**

If approved, the Town will collaborate with WCCD, SUM, and staff experts to gather all available Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and submit them for ISO 37125 certification in Q4 2024 and 2025. These KPIs will help create ESG Profiles and Annual Impact Reports, which are essential for managing capital plans and investments. The data collected will support the development of a comprehensive Annual ESG Profile Report, highlighting the Town’s commitment to sustainability, social inclusion, and transparent governance. This will attract investment and demonstrate progress to residents, businesses, and visitors.

Conversations with WCCD also confirmed that participation in this initiative will not result in additional staff work and that the audit protocol will be done through publicly available data. Any staff impacts required to implement changes in order to conform to the standard will need to be assessed after the audit protocol has been completed.

**CONSIDERATIONS:**

**(A) PUBLIC**

This initiative promotes and advances the Town’s leadership in data management and commitment to data-based decisions. The Town is committed to public transparency and accountability. Progress towards ISO 37125 Certification will be reported to Council and the public every year. KPIs and ESG Profiles will be made public.

**(B) FINANCIAL**

For this two-year Pilot Project, the Town will pay \$205,000 USD (approximately \$300,000 CAD), plus applicable sales taxes, for ISO 37125 certification over the two-year period. This amount will be funded from the corporate contingency budget. The Town’s commitment to this certification will be reviewed and assessed upon completion of the Pilot Project.

**(C) IMPACT ON OTHER DEPARTMENTS & USERS**

As a result of its previous work with the Town of Oakville and partnerships with the Federal and Provincial governments, there will be no staff impacts.

**(D) COUNCIL STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

This report addresses the corporate strategic goal(s) to:

- Support a transparent and accountable government.
- Attract and drive investment attraction.
- Managing growth for a vibrant local economy.
- Enhancing community belonging.
- Ensuring environmental sustainability to meet future needs related to natural areas and greenspaces and act on climate change adaptation and mitigation.

**(E) CLIMATE CHANGE/ACTION**

- (F)** ISO 37125 focuses on environmental responsibility and sustainability and supports efforts in generating sustainable finance and building a green economy. ISO 37125 builds a baseline on resilience and WCCD/SUM are core partners with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (the UN organization whose mandate is supporting communities in resilience and safety) in Geneva to support cities in building more resilient futures.

**APPENDICES:**

Appendix A: Town of Oakville Letter of Invitation World Premiere City

Prepared by:  
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Office of Mayor and Council

Submitted by:  
Mayor Rob Burton